

## Complaints Policy and Procedure

City of Wolverhampton Council is a Customer First organisation. We believe that the needs of our residents are our top priority and we are committed to putting our customers first by improving the quality of our services and our customers' experience of them.

City of Wolverhampton Council wants to encourage all customers to be involved in the decisions that we make and in the development of our services. We welcome our customers' views. One of the ways in which we acquire comments and opinions in order to influence service planning and delivery is through customer comments, compliments and complaints.

This policy sets out how City of Wolverhampton Council manages and responds to comments, compliments and complaints.

### Comments

If you want to make a comment about anything that the Council does or if you would like to make a suggestion on how we could improve the services that we provide, we would welcome your thoughts.

### Compliments

If you receive a particularly good service and wish to make a compliment, we will ensure that the person or service is made aware of your comments. The compliment will be logged by the complaints team and an acknowledgement issued by the relevant service.

More information is available via [www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/contact-us/customer-feedback](http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/contact-us/customer-feedback)

### Complaints

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the Council's action or lack of action or about the standard of a service, whether the action was taken or service provided by the Council itself or a person or body acting on behalf of the Council.

You don't need to make a complaint if you want to report:

- Litter
- Potholes
- Missed bin collection
- Abandoned vehicles
- Graffiti etc.

You can simply call us, email us or complete an online e-form. If you are dissatisfied with the action that we take in response to your enquiries then we need to know

## Exceptions

In some cases, we may not be able to deal with your complaint directly, this may be because they are covered by different procedures. The types of areas that we won't deal with through our complaints procedure include:

- Staff/ex-staff complaints about employment matters including grievances or disciplinary hearings
- Penalty Charge Notice appeals
- Benefit appeals about decisions or the rate of payment
- School admission appeals
- Cases where legal action has already started
- Cases covered by our insurance procedures
- Complaints about councillors
- Council tax banding decisions
- Complaints that are being investigated under statutory procedures for children, families and vulnerable adults
- Where the complaint has already been dealt with in another way, for example, by the courts or Ombudsman.

The Council will always offer advice and assistance to customers wishing to make a complaint. If it is not appropriate to treat an issue under the corporate complaints procedure, as described above, we will refer you to the appropriate procedure or we will advise you on how to make your complaint elsewhere.

### 1. How to make a complaint

If you are not happy with a service you have received from us or the way you have been treated, we want you to tell us so that we can, where possible find a satisfactory resolution.

There are a number of ways you can make a complaint to us:

- Phone Complaints Team on 01902 551901/01902 553215
- Complete the council's complaints form
- Complete the council's complaints e-form via [www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/contact-us/customer-feedback](http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/contact-us/customer-feedback)
- Email us at [customerfeedback@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto:customerfeedback@wolverhampton.gov.uk)
- In person at the Civic Centre
- Write to our Complaints Manager, City of Wolverhampton Council, Civic Centre, St Peter's Square, Wolverhampton, WV1 1RL
- Ask a friend, a relative, advocate or anyone to contact us your behalf

Make sure you give us as much information as possible. Let us know what you think has gone wrong and how you think we can correct it.

### 2. Complaints process

There are two stages to the Council's complaints process. We aim to resolve all our complaints at stage 1.

If we have made a mistake, there are several ways we can try to put it right. This includes:

- Make an apology
- Give a full explanation
- Review a decision we have already made
- Review our procedures
- Consider and advise on financial compensation

We will consider each case on its own merits and offer the most suitable remedy.

### **Time limit for making a complaint**

Complaints will only be accepted if they are reported to the Council within 12 months of the incident the complaint refers to and falls within the corporate complaints procedure. Where there is any dispute in relation to this, the Complaints Manager will assess whether the complaint can be accepted after the 12-month time period has elapsed. If the complaint is not accepted due to the 12-month time limit, for example, complaint does not fall within the corporate complaints procedure due to a complaint being previously raised, investigated and concluded, then the reasons for the decision must be provided to the Director of Governance within two working days, to determine if the complaint can or cannot be accepted.

### **What will happen with your complaint?**

#### **Stage 1**

We will acknowledge your complaint within 4 calendar days. Your complaint will be allocated to a senior manager from the service area complained about. An investigation will take place and you will be provided with a response within 21 calendar days. If we need more time to investigate your complaint we will let you know.

#### **Stage 2**

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your Stage 1 complaint and would like to request a further investigation, please contact the Complaints Manager in writing within 21 calendar days from the date of the Stage 1 complaint letter.

We will acknowledge your complaint within 4 calendar days. Your complaint will be investigated by the Complaints Manager. When the investigation is complete a report will be prepared and shared as appropriate with the relevant Head of Service. If we need more time to investigate your complaint we will let you know.

A full response will be sent to you within 28 calendar days and you will be advised of what to do next if you wish to pursue your complaint.

### **The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman**

Stage 2 is the final stage of the Council's complaints procedure. If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome your complaint, you can contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman at:

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, PO Box 4771, Coventry, CV4 0EH

Tel: 0300 061 0614

Website [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)

### **3. Complaints monitoring**

Performance by areas of service is monitored on a monthly basis with reports produced for management as required.

Performance figures will be published on the Council's website:

[www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/contact-us/customer-feedback](http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/contact-us/customer-feedback)

The Complaints Manager will produce an annual report for City of Wolverhampton Council providing an overview of the complaints that have been received and overall performance. This report will be published on the council's website.

### **4. Procedure on the management of unreasonable customer behaviour**

This procedure sets out how we will decide which customers will be treated as unreasonable or unreasonably persistent, and what we will do in those circumstances. The procedure is for the information of staff, staff in City of Wolverhampton Council's partner organisations and councillors as well as customers. A copy of this procedure is available on the Council's website:

<https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/customer-feedback/make-complaint>